This is our VVRC REPEATER print version An expanded online version is available by free subscription Go to w6vvr.net

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER
REPEATER

January 2013

President's Message-The Feedline

By Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX

So, I guess that the hype about the world coming to an end on December 21, 2012 was just that: One big build up of anticipation without any substance! Have any of you got any New Year resolutions? Mine is to put a new roof on the QTH and then reinstall all of my antennas including a few not yet erected. As much as I was wanting a new project to move forward, the winter rains just keep getting in the way. But at least with the recent dry weather, I've been able to clean up my property some and make that much needed trip out to the landfill. So, has those amongst those members with a viable radio been working the 10 meter band lately?

I hope to see a good turnout for our first 2013 club meeting. Why? Well, I'm going to bring my home built Super J-pole antenna so that those attending members can take a look at it and I will also be bringing to the meeting a short video about PL-259 connectors that I'm sure will be a good crowd pleaser! As for the ramp, I do not have any idea as to what the status is other than to say that it's rebuilding delay probably has something to do with the recent wet weather and unless it stays dry for say about a month, the ramp rebuild will likely be delayed even further which I'm sure that those club members who really need it are outright frustrated!

In my next newsletter blog, I will have some information about where the next Christmas party event is likely to be held.

I for one (and likely many others) was not impressed at all given that we used this business in the past and the staff at the restaurant did a better job then unlike what transpired at our 2012 party. So hopefully with the next newsletter, I'll have at the very least two good viable places within the local area to tell everyone about. I will be sending letter to the management letting them know of our club's displeasure with their service & food!!!

Well, that's about all for the moment. Until next month, be safe, be well and G.O.T.A.! 73!

IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the President……1
Around the Shack……1
Holiday Party……2
Maritime Mobile……2
New York Ham Keeps Antennas……3
Army MARS……4
IRC's going Away……4
DXpeditions on the calendar……5
Membership Application……5

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

I always enjoy the timeline from Merriment on Main in late November through New Year's Day and the Straight Key Night. There are a couple of minor contests that I can dabble in while sitting around drinking Egg Nog and enjoying the Christmas tree. I don't take these contests seriously so if my wife Cora asks me to do something, no problem, I'll pause what I am doing and see what she is up to.

The ARRL Logbook of the World is still running about 12 days behind so I have decided to hold off uploading anything to it until ARRL gets the problem solved. I guess they are going to install some new hardware soon to shorten up the queue to what it use to be for many years. For a long time the queue was only a few hours.

I did not participate in the Radio Amateurs of Canada Contest this year which was held on December 29. I just had too much going on between Christmas and New Year.

A few years ago in January 2010, Scott Joseph (now K5BGL) and I participated in the ARRL VHF/UHF contest as a rover using the call sign W6VVR/R. Although I am not prepared to do that again this year, I think I may get it going again for the June VHF/UHF contest as a rover. I'll need to buy or borrow a VHF/UHF radio and figure out an antenna arrangement or something. We sure had fun rolling around the countryside working stations from different grids.

I was in charge of the log, Scott had the wheels. We came in first place in the Sacramento Valley Section for that contest and received a certificate suitable for framing for our effort.

With the beginning of winter in the northern hemisphere, summer is in full swing in the southern hemisphere.

This is the time of year the Antarctic amateur radio stations go on the air. I have worked so far this year RI1ANF on two bands and QRP and KC4AAA which is right at the South Pole. These stations will be workable for a few months.

Lots of Japanese tourist/hams on the air right now from Palau T8, Saipan KHØ, and Micronesia V63 now through the New Year. I worked a Brit over on the South Cook Islands on the 15 meter band with only 3 watts this morning. Norman E51E was on holiday as well, just soaking up the warmth of the South Pacific and talking on the radio.

In the other direction several Europeans are on holiday in Africa these days. I worked German tourist/hams in Namibia V5, and a few Russians in Angola D2 this past week.

The end of the world station NØD was on the air too. It stopped transmitting on December 22 when nothing happened. I know Marcus KI6WDX registered his station as an End of the World station and has the certificate suitable for framing to show for it.

That's it for now! Get on the air, have some fun! 73!

Holiday Party!

Thanks to everyone that turned out for the W6VVR Vaca Valley Radio Club Holiday Party. We owe Bob K6HEW a high five for organizing the venue and getting the reservation.

Congratulations to Tom KE6MDM who was the big winner of the end of year cash drawing. Everyone that attended walked away with a gift and a smile.

The after party was over at Foster's Freeze with frozen deserts making the rounds for several people.

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011 ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Vice President: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Richard Craig, KJ6MIB
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

ARRL Logbook of the World Back Log

You may have noticed the server back log of QSO's in the queue on LoTW. Currently the back log is over 12 days and rising.

According to Harold WJ1B ARRL COO, new equipment has arrived and will be configured and tested over the next few weeks. Hopefully going on line in January and reversing the growing queue to a manageable size.

The problem has existed for over a year and has only gotten worse with more and more subscribers using the service to collect confirmations of their worldwide DX contacts.

The problem peaks on the weekends of the big contests where thousands of new logs with hundreds and thousands of QSO's are uploaded all at once. Hopefully the problem will go away with the new equipment.

Maritime Mobile Service Network Celebrates 45 years

Thursday, January 3, 2013, marks the 45th Anniversary of the "Maritime Mobile Service Network". The need for the type of volunteer service provided by the network had existed for many years. The launching of an organization to meet this need was placed on the drawing board when nine (9) amateur radio operators met at the home of Chaplain Alla Winston Robertson, USN, WB4AKB (now KB5YX) on December 27, 1967. Those meeting with Robertson were: S.C. Rock, WA4YVQ; Mel White, WA4IQS; D. Freeman, K1YLI; J.G. Kincade, WA4YVX; Art Werner, K3QYQ; H. Bretches, K4DBR; L.B. Lapman, W4SAW; and G.W. Powell, WA4RRO. This group agreed to launch the Maritime Mobile Service Network, or MMSN, on January 3, 1968 at 2130 UTC on 14.320 MHz but had to move to 14.317 MHz a few weeks later to avoid excessive interference. In 1969, when the net moved to 14.313 MHz, it also established 14.300 MHz as an alternate working frequency and for years operated on either frequency depending on nearby interference, but, since before 2000, the net has been operating exclusively on 14.300 MHz.

The original purpose of the MMSN was to "Serve Those Who Serve" in the United States military during the Vietnam crisis. Since that time, the network has grown considerably in hours of operation and services provided and consist of a dedicated group of Radio Amateurs who unselfishly volunteer their time, equipment, and efforts to serve and assist those in need of communications from foreign countries and the high seas.

Our primary purpose now is that of handling legal third party traffic from maritime mobiles, both pleasure and commercial and overseas-deployed military personnel. We also help missionaries in foreign countries, and volunteer net control stations from throughout North America maintain the network. Furthermore, these stations are assisted by relay stations to ensure total coverage of the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean & Caribbean Seas, and eastern Pacific Ocean. The network, in particular, has been formally recognized for it's work with

emergency traffic by the Dept. of Homeland Security, the United States Coast Guard and the National Weather Service, to mention a few.

The Maritime Mobile Service Network has grown in hours of operation from a 5 hour net operating 7 days a week to the 9 hour format today which is from 12:00 pm to 10:00 pm Eastern Time during daylight savings time and until 9:00 pm during standard time. In the early years, phone patch traffic was heavy, estimating over 10,000 pieces of traffic handled each year from 1968-1977. One of our net control stations (Dave Wagner, WA2DXQ in Fort Lauderdale, FL) ran well over 1000 phone patches during the 2 year period of 1977-1978, mostly to United States Navy (USN) ships in the Mediterranean and Red Sea but also to a few missionaries and both private and commercial vessels. Though the need for phone patch traffic has diminished considerably over the past 15 to 20 years, the need is still there. If it hadn't been for a number of our net control stations equipped with a phone patch, some rescues the net's been involved in would not have been as successful. Many mariners in the Caribbean Islands, Central and South America and the Gulf of Mexico view the network as a resource for weather information as well as a safety valve and trusted contact point for essential communications.

In 2003, the late Frank Kelley, N3FK, said "I would be remiss if I didn't say something about a great lady who used the net to get assistance with numerous medical problems. She was Ruth Paz, HR2RP, located in San Pedro Sula in Honduras". Frank was stationed in Panama from 1975-1977, and Ruth was a net control station for the MMSN during that time. Continuing, he stated "Ruth was a nurse and was the only medical type person in her area. She used the net to get medical advice, medical evacuations and medicine in and out of Honduras. While I was stationed in the Canal Zone, Ruth ran many patches to the Gorgas Army Hospital in Panama. She used the tropical disease section on Gorgas to save and help many people from Honduras, many of whom were bitten by exotic creatures. At the time Gorgas was the place for anything tropical." Today phone patch traffic has subsided, but there remain some net control stations to help with many of the missionaries and doctors in various locations with phone patch and assisting physicians to find needed help they can't otherwise obtain.

Since March 2000, the net's been featured in many publications such as QST (including network television news magazines) demonstrating help and rescue of people in life and death situations. There have been two notable rescues nearly one year apart: the S/V Hayat on March 27, 2000 off the northeast coast of Honduras and the S/V Lorna on March 20, 2001 off the northeast coast of Venezuela and west of Trinidad. In each case, one passenger was seriously injured from gun fire from modern day pirates and thankfully both survived. The Maritime Mobile Service Network has a legacy of service which will continue due to the selfless volunteer amateur radio operators donating their time to train and be ready to help each and everyday. Without such devotion, the net wouldn't be able to do what it does. As a member, I want to say a big thank you to all who've served in the past as well as those serving now. It's been a great 45 years, and may the net last to see another 45 years and more.

In honor of celebrating our 45th anniversary, the Maritime Mobile Service Network will unveil a new website design as well as announcing our presence on FaceBook on Thursday, January 3, 2013. We welcome everyone to visit our new-look website as well as signing our new "Guest Book" and liking us on FaceBook.

Best Regards,
Bobby Graves, KB5HAV

New York City Ham Wins Appeal, Can Keep His Tower

12/19/2012

In September 2010, Paul Isaacs, W2JGQ, of New York City, obtained a building permit for his Amateur Radio antenna support structure, comprised of a 40 foot tower topped by a Yagi antenna. Isaacs installed his antenna system on the roof of his four story brownstone -- 58 feet above ground -- in lower Manhattan.

Almost four months later -- months after the erection of the system -- the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) declared its intention to revoke Isaacs' properly attained building permit, claiming that his Amateur Radio antenna system was not, in the Department's opinion, "an accessory use." Isaacs appealed the decision through the Department's bureaucracy, and when that didn't reverse the decision, he had a series of hearings before the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals.

In November 2012, the Board ruled that though per-

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@w6vvr.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at: vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.470 MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.2ØØ(-) – PL 127.3Hz
WV6F 44Ø.Ø25 – PL 127.3Hz

haps uncommon, an Amateur Radio antenna system is indeed an accessory use under New York City's zoning ordinance and the building permit was properly granted. "The Board agrees with DCP [Department of City Planning] that the size of a use can be relevant to whether it is 'incidental to' and 'customarily found in connection with' a principal use," the Board wrote in its decision. "However, it finds that in the case of Amateur Radio towers, unlike cellular [towers] and certain other uses, there is no articulated standard to guide DOB in determining at what height a particular radio tower becomes a non-accessory."

The full decision may be found **here** under "Application of Paul K. Isaacs." Isaacs was represented by attorneys Fred Hopengarten, K1VR, Stuart Klein and Chris Slowik.

Army MARS in Sandy

Bill Sexton (N1IN)

All that radio equipment, but Ron Tomo AAT2BC had to send his situation reports from Long Island N.Y. by Smartphone. A fallen tree smashed his antenna system.

But for its signature line, the Sitrep [situation report] from Army MARS station AAT3BC pretty much typified the grim situation of many Army MARS operators in the waterlogged Northeast coast on the day that Sandy struck:

"Bad hits to my QTH [location]. MARS station AAC2NY down. Multiple antennas down. On generators. All phones, tv, Internet are dead. Running VHF and monitoring USCG 2182."

What made the message exceptional was how Long Islander Ron Tomo, a longtime emergency communicator and hospital IT executive -- and apparently good-natured even in a calamity -- managed to get his message out:

"Sent from Ron's Mind thru his iPhone."

Topping off a historic meteorological one-two punch, the center of Hurricane Sandy battered ashore only a few miles west of Hurricane Irene's disastrously similar assault on the Northeast only 14 months previously. Irene had been ranked as the 5th costliest hurricane in the last quarter-century. Thanks to Sandy's merger with a gale out of the west plus its own lethal tidal surge heightened by full moon, Sandy was fated to exceed Irene in suffering and cost.

For this storm Army MARS fielded its brand-new National Operations Net ("Opnet"), a unique interlocked linkage of HF regional nets feeding secure digital traffic to MARS HQ at Ft Huachuca Ariz. and from there the Pentagon when needed. Its core of 13 net controllers across the continent had only a couple months' to organize. Even so, Net Manager Robert Mims AAA1RD in Taunton Mass. reported that the infant system's 33-hour activation "provided admirable coverage even during difficult propagation conditions." Leaders in the storm area agreed.

Despite the mandatory evacuations, flooding of generators and destruction of antennas (if not their homes), a reduced number of operators still succeeded in maintaining backup connections for governmental emergency operations centers in hardest-hit FEMA Regions Two and Three, from Virginia to New York.

Within the disaster zone, the Opnet tied in with the Region Two (N.Y.-N.J.) Command Post AAR2CAC located in an AT&T emergency control center at Middletown N.J. right under Sandy's path toward Manhattan. "During the height of the storm we could feel the five- story steel and reinforced concrete building shake with the high winds," said Region Emergency Coordinator Mark Emanuel, AAM2RE, one of four MARS operators there. "Sandy Hook Bay and the open sea are just a few miles away but our building is thoroughly hardened against the elements." Region Director Dick Corp AAA2RD logged 33 stations active in Region two.

In Region Three (PA. DE. MD. DC VA. WV.) Army MARS established communications for the Maryland EMA to National Guard assets at Easton, MD, on the isolated Delmarva Peninsula. Faced with a shortage of available operators the MD agency also called on MARS operators to plug gaps in the state RACES operation. Region Emergency Coordinator Gary Strong AAM3RE counted 20 stations active. "Some worked consecutive shifts at the state EMA," he said. MEMA HQ

From a vantage point near New York's state capital, Region Two's Dick Corp cited the close coordination with neighboring regions up and down the Atlantic coast. From Maine to Florida (Regions 1-4) oeprators were on duty. "We should all be proud," he said. "Inter-region cooperation was excellent and the Opnet was extremely functional and did an outstanding job."

For Corp the storm posed a special challenge. Earlier this year he had merged the separate the N.Y. and N.J. Army MARS formations into a single command since the two states are so closely tied geographically, with the New York City metro area encompassing both. "AAR2CAC (the command station across New York Bay from New York City) was invaluable," he said. "It was the glue."

As for Ron Tomo, an experienced net control operator, he rigged up a VHF antenna for contact with nearby hams and emergency responders and put in 68 hours coordinating their emergency traffic.

USPS Seeks to Phase Out IRCs

11/06/2012

If the US Postal Service (**USPS**) gets its way, it will no longer sell International Reply Coupons (IRCs) after January 27, 2013. According to the **October 23 edition of the *Federal Register***, there is not sufficient demand for the USPS to continue offering IRCs to customers; however, per the Universal Postal Union (**UPU**) **regulations**, the USPS must continue to

(redeem) IRCs that have been purchased in foreign countries and presented at USPS facilities. The current Nairobi model is valid through December 31, 2013. Comments on this proposed change **will be accepted** through November 23, 2012.

IRCs provide foreign addressees with a prepaid means of responding to inquiries, solicitations or other types of communications -- such as QSL cards -- that are initiated by US senders. IRCs are exchangeable for postage stamps by postal administrations in member countries of the UPU. Each IRC is equivalent in value to the destination country's minimum postage price for an unregistered airmail letter. The purchase price is in the US is currently $2.20 per IRC. -- *Thanks to* ***The Daily DX*** *for some information.*

Carl, SM6CPY will be active holiday-style from Rwanda as **9X0PY between January 15-31, 2013.** He will try to be active all bands depending on antenna possibilities. Mainly CW (listen up 25), 100w.

A31WH – Tonga

Werner, DJ9KH plans to be active from Tonga between February 20 – March 3, 2013.

He will be QRV from Tongatapu OC-049 as **A31WH** and **A31WH/P** from Vava'u OC-064.

QSL via H/c.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues --------- $20.00 _____
Each Family Member -- $ 2.00 _____
Student ---------- $ 5.00 _____
Repeater/Autopatch donation --- _____
Call/Name badge -------- $11.00 _____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues ---------- $37.00 _____
Senior is 65 yr or older with one time proof on age.

Total---------- _____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143